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Message Text

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15
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07

MC-02 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /074 W
---------- 055793
R 041110Z MAY 76
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5717
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
USCINCPAC HAWAII

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 6543

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFORN, MASS, IN, PK, US
SUBJ: DEPUTY FORMIN ON US ARMS SALES TO PAKISTAN;
INDO-US RELATIONS

REF: NEW DELHI 6470, NEW DELHI 7325

1. DEPUTY MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS BIPIN PAL DAS TOLD NEWSMEN IN CALCUTTA ON MAY 3 THAT INDIA HAD BEEN REPEATEDLY ASSURED BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT THAT THE LATTER WOULD NOT SUPPLY ANY ARMS TO PAKISTAN WHICH COULD LEAD TO AN ARMS RACE IN THE SUB-CONTINENT. THE INDIAN EXPRESS FOR MAY 4 QUOTES THE DEPUTY MINISTER AS SAYING THAT "NOW EVENTS ONLY WILL PROVE" (THE VERACITY OF THAT POLICY). DAS DISMISSED A CONCPET OF STRATEGIC ARMS BALANCE BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN, TAKING THE TRADITIONAL GOI POSITION THAT INDIA'S LONG BORDERS AND SEA COASTS REQUIRED GREATER DEFENSE ASSETS THAN PAKISTAN NEEDS.

2. THE DEPUTY MINISTER ALSO OBSERVED THAT A GOOD
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START HAD BEEN MADE TOWARDS IMPROVEMENT OF ECONOMIC AND

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CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND INDIA. HE REFERRED TO THE MEETINGS OF THE SUB-COMMISSIONS ON TRADE AND ECONOMICS AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TOGETHER WITH THE SESSION OF THE JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL, ALL OF WHICH HE SAID HAD MADE GOOD PROGRESS. DAS ALSO MENTIONED THE EDUCATION AND CULTURE SUB-COMMISSION MEETING IN WASHINGTON IN THE SAME VEIN.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH DAS IS NOT A PRINCIPAL FOREIGN POLICY SPOKESMAN, WE BELIEVE HIS REMARKS AT THIS TIME ARE SIGNIFICANT. HIS COMMENTS ON ARMS SALES TO PAKISTAN WERE - LIKE RECENT PRESS COVERAGE OF THE STORY (REFTEL 6470) - RESTRAINED. MRS GANDHI'S MAY 1 REMARKS (REFTEL 7325) COULD HAVE SERVED AS AN OPENER FOR MORE STRIDENT FOLLOW-UP.
SAXBE

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